

THE LATE ZHOU DYNASTY

Confucius (551–479 B.C.E.)—a Chinese philosopher and teacher whose ideas and teachings influenced Chinese (and other Asian countries') government, society, and culture

Confucius lived during a very unstable and difficult time. He lived during the end of the Zhou (pronounced “joe”) Dynasty (1122–221 B.C.E.). A dynasty is a period of rule by members of a single clan.¹ By the time of Confucius, the Zhou clan had already been in power for hundreds of years. Over time, the Zhou Dynasty had become quite weak and the Zhou ruler was not very powerful. The Zhou house was not able to keep Chinese society at peace. As a result, China was divided into many small states, each of which had its own separate lord. Wars between the states and their lords were frequent and deadly, causing great disorder and suffering among the people. Confucius and many others during this time looked for ways to improve their society and make it more peaceful.

GROUP TASK

1. With your group, discuss the paragraph. List the three most important points of the paragraph.
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2. Illustrate each point on a separate sheet of paper. Your illustrations will be added to the class timeline. You can include words on your illustrations. Make sure you write in large letters so that everyone in the room can see.
3. Include these points on your individual timelines.
4. Prepare a short presentation about your illustrations. Your presentation should include
 - a description of each illustration
 - its importance
 - the date (if used)